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ABSTRACT

Arguing that educational institutions share responsibility with social service and welfare institutions for addressing the range of children's needs, this policy statement presents principles and strategies for implementing broader collaboration with community organizations. Introductory sections acknowledge the need for joint action and identify student needs as health and physical competence, personal and social competence, cognitive and creative competence, vocational competence, and citizenship. Next, principles guiding this change are presented, including that desired outcomes be defined in positive terms and actions aligned to achieve those objectives; that educators contribute to an effective system of support for children by being responsive to child diversity, flexible, prevention oriented, and family centered; that educators integrate efforts to support children and families into efforts to restructure schools; and that these changes be part of a larger national effort. Seven strategies for change are then presented, including: (1) developing cross-sector outcomes-based accountability; (2) developing creative strategies for financing children and family support; (3) establishing local governance structures; (4) implementing new systems of professional development; (5) reevaluating school policies and programs; (6) increasing school cooperation with families; and (7) implementing youth development opportunities. Concluding sections call on state governments to take an active role in implementing these strategies. (BCY)

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ED 362 334

# STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

A POLICY STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

NOVEMBER 1992

PS 021836

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Because the Council represents each state's chief education administrator, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and to the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other education organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect elementary and secondary education. Thus, CCSSO members are able to act cooperatively on matters vital to the education of America's young people.

The CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity provides services designed to achieve equity and high quality education for minorities, women and girls, and for the disabled, limited English proficient, and low-income students. The Center is responsible for managing and staffing a variety of CCSSO leadership initiatives to assure education success for all children and youth, especially those placed at risk of school failure.


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# STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

A POLICY STATEMENT OF

THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF

STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

NOVEMBER 1992

# INTRODUCTION

The Council of Chief State School Officers has adopted "Student Success Through Collaboration" as our priority for 1992. During the past decade, the Council has endeavored to improve the quality of our nation's public education system, with the goal of ensuring success for all students in our schools. Our efforts to restructure the nation's schools are guided by a concern that all children be afforded the choices and opportunities they need to thrive in our society.

As educators, we recognize that a strong investment in high-quality education is essential if we are to prepare our children for productive employment, healthful lifestyles, knowledgeable and contributing citizenship, strong family formation, and other adult responsibilities. However, if all children and youth are to develop the skills and competencies they need to assume these adult responsibilities, our national investment in the development of children and youth must transcend the school's traditional focus on cognitive development. We must redefine what we mean when we speak of "student success" and broaden our understanding of education to encompass children's continuing intellectual, physical, emotional and social development, and well-being.

As we have worked to expand the options and support available to all students through improved education, we have studied factors external to the education system that also affect the life chances of children and youth. Ill health, poor housing, family disorganization, inadequate nutrition, poverty, substance abuse, insufficient child care, and unsafe streets all imperil our children's wholesome development as surely as does ineffective education.

The needs of today's students are many and complex. Distressing statistics illustrate the unacceptable numbers of children and families who face situations that threaten their immediate well-being and put them at risk of long-term disadvantage. More than 12 million children live in poverty. Half a million children are born each year to teenage parents. More than 50 percent of all children are projected to live in a single-parent household at some point in their youth. Two million children per year are reported abused or neglected. Nearly 1.5 million children live outside their families.

Any of these facts is itself cause for great concern. Even more troubling is the insidious relationship among many of these problems. Teen parents are rarely equipped for family and adult economic responsibilities. Over half of all mothers receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children had their first child as a teen. Only about half of teen mothers graduate from high school. Female-headed households are vulnerable to poverty. A growing body of research

makes clear the correlations among these negative outcomes; for many families these problems are interrelated and multigenerational. Poverty alone is a great and far-reaching source of risk.

Although no risk factor makes school failure or long-term dependence inevitable, such bleak circumstances pose formidable barriers for millions of young people and their families. Education has traditionally been considered a means of escape from poverty and dependence; however, the same conditions that impel a family to seek help from a social service agency have the potential to negatively affect a child's performance in school.

Despite major reforms in organizations that serve children and families, the sum total of institutional response to these problems has thus far been inadequate. To some extent, our shortcomings can be attributed to a lack of essential services. For instance, 20 percent of children are not covered by health insurance. Less than half of the disadvantaged children who could benefit from educational assistance provided through Chapter 1 receive services. Foster care reimbursement rates fall far below the cost of rearing a child. Employment and training services under the Job Training Partnership Act serve a small number of eligible youth and provide an average of only 18 weeks of training. Yet even in times of recession and budget cutbacks, a large portion of public expenditures is devoted to a wide array of programs and services intended to benefit our nation's young people.

Unfortunately, as a nation we have constructed systems of institutions and organizations that taken as a whole do not yield a favorable return on our investment in children and families. Seldom are the "people-serving" systems equipped to respond to the multiple and interrelated needs of many children and their families. Some, like our child welfare system, were originally designed to intervene once a child or family exhibited signs of severe distress, and now are constrained by limited resources from initiating the prevention services leaders in the field advocate. In general, systems do not react to early warning signs, but respond to failure or crisis, when it is much more difficult and expensive to make a difference. There is little investment in preventive or developmental services that strengthen the capacities of children and families to help themselves, thus averting the need for acute, problem-oriented services.

Unlike public education, most social services are not universally available, even when there is demonstrable need. Who can be helped and what help is available is generally determined by stringent eligibility rules and program definitions. When systems can intervene, their objectives are often narrow and modest, ignoring related problems.

To make matters worse, most of these systems function in isolation, apart from the education system and each other. Interventions tend to deal with parts of problems, rather than whole

children and families. Schools alone cannot meet the myriad human service needs of young people and their families; welfare and social services may momentarily mitigate a crisis, but cannot promise a hopeful future to those who lack the abilities demanded by the job market. Yet there are few existing mechanisms to identify those in need and ensure that they are aware of, have access to, and benefit from resources that are available to help them.

If all children and youth are to flourish, as a society we must do a better job of publicly supporting families and communities, as well as institutions like schools. Our families, communities, and institutions have a combined responsibility not only to meet children's basic needs—material ones such as food, shelter, and access to medical care, as well as abstract ones like a sense of safety, belonging, and participation in caring relationships—but also to prepare them for a productive and rewarding future.

## Recognizing the Needs of Children and Their Families

In normal development, most children's needs are met, and young people are equipped for adult responsibilities through the acquisition of a range of skills and competencies, including:

- *Health and Physical Competence*—good current health status and the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior that will ensure a healthful lifestyle.

- *Personal and Social Competence*—intrapersonal skills, including self-understanding and self-discipline; interpersonal skills, including the ability to work with others, communicate, cooperate, and negotiate; coping skills; and judgment skills.

- *Cognitive and Creative Competence*—broad base of knowledge; ability to appreciate and participate in creative and artistic expression; good oral and written language skills; problem-solving and analytical skills; mathematical skills; and ability and interest in lifelong learning.

- *Vocational Competence*—understanding and awareness of vocational options and of steps needed to act on vocational choices; adequate preparation for chosen career; understanding of the value and function of work in our society.

- *Citizenship*—understanding of the history and values of one's nation and community; participation in efforts that contribute to the nation and community; appreciation of and respect for cultural diversity.

Children develop these competencies within their families—if they have strong, supportive families—and through opportunities available in the community. These opportunities include participation in group activities; associations with peers; moral and practical guidance; access to role models; activities that cultivate knowledge, skills, and physical, emotional, and intellectual growth; and situations that develop the ability to act autonomously and in cooperation with others.

Responsibility for providing rich and varied opportunities to develop the full range of essential skills and competencies is not the school's alone. Learning and development take place and are affected as much by what happens in as out of school. All children and youth need access to diverse developmental opportunities in their homes, neighborhoods, and schools. These opportunities can be provided through organized sports and recreational activities; art, music, and cultural enrichment activities; hobby pursuits, volunteer service, and scouting and other club activities; and summer job programs and other chances for exposure to the world of work. We call on schools to join with families and a variety of public and private agencies to make such opportunities universally available.

Some children and families also have exceptional needs, which may require more intensive responses to ensure ongoing healthy development and success. Children and youth who are ill or have physical or mental disabilities, learning disorders, or behavioral problems often need individualized interventions. Families in distress may need assistance providing basic care, comfort, and nurturing to their children, including financial and other help arranging for basic necessities and services, such as shelter and medical care.

As educators, we share responsibility for preparing our nation's youth for adulthood with families and numerous agencies and organizations. These groups include public and private human services agencies, the public health system, private health care providers, the courts, religious organizations, institutions of higher education, and other national and community-based nonprofit organizations. We believe that working jointly to support the development of children and youth is the most effective strategy for the prevention of youth problems and the achievement of our educational goals. Together we must ensure the availability of opportunities and services that promote the general development of all children, as well as services designed to respond to the specific needs of children and families experiencing difficulties. Seen in these terms, student success is the responsibility of the entire nation and will require concerted action by all institutions serving children and families.

A great deal of experimentation in the area of school-community collaboration has begun. Although this rich base of activity is promising, much work remains if collaboration among education and other organizations is to truly enhance our investment

in children's sustained development and success. Many education policymakers and practitioners are poised for action, but practical questions remain about the role of schools and the usefulness of collaboration in ensuring that all children reach their full potential. This statement of policy sets forth principles and strategies that address these unanswered questions.

## Establishing a Common Vision for Children and Families

To leverage our investment in education and other children's and family services to the greatest extent possible, every societal institution that touches the lives of young people must be held accountable for helping them develop the skills and competencies they need to succeed as adults. Under our current system, responsibility for the well-being of children and their families is fragmented. Overlapping and often conflicting purposes define the individual policies and practices of different institutions serving children and their families.

We cannot afford to let children and their families receive discrete, unconnected services from a number of agencies or organizations working in isolation of each other. All too often, these agencies are unaware that they could be working together to address difficulties and help children and families acquire skills that will help ensure that problems do not grow worse or recur. We can no longer tolerate interventions with conflicting goals. Is it any wonder that a teenager who discovers that income saved from a summer job may disqualify her family from receiving food stamps and Medicaid becomes confused about the value of work in our society?

Forging agreement on the positive outcomes we want our young people to attain is a necessary first step in the process of bringing coherence and continuity to the myriad efforts to support children, youth, and families. We must collectively define the goals we have for young people and their families and develop indicators to help us measure whether we are achieving those goals. Once we have established this common vision, we must critically examine the policies and practices of the institutions and organizations that work with children, youth, and families to ensure that these practices help develop the skills and competencies children need. We cannot allow goal-setting to be a purely rhetorical exercise. Articulating the outcomes will do us no good if we do not change the mandates, missions, programs, and practices of institutions that serve children, youth, and families.

## Changing the Way We Support Children and Families

To improve the lives and life chances of all children, we must make changes in our classrooms, neighborhoods, and homes. All institutional systems of service—education, health, social service, and juvenile justice—must work with every community to see that the necessary support and developmental opportunities are available. We must launch aggressive local efforts to ensure that agencies and organizations concerned with children and families are meeting their basic needs and building the competencies they need for success in our society. These efforts must be community based and administratively decentralized if they are to meet the diverse and changing needs of our nation's children and families.

All levels of government, however, have critical roles in bringing coherence, quality, and equity to the support services and developmental opportunities communities make available to children and their families. Transformations in the way agencies and organizations interact with children and families simply will not occur on a broad scale without changes in the way these entities are funded, regulated, and held accountable. There will always be examples of local innovation and exemplary practice that occur despite normal bureaucratic procedures. But within our large public systems, effective programs remain the exception, not the rule. Most of our systems contain incentives that undermine the hallmarks of effective programs: comprehensiveness, intensiveness, a family and community focus, flexibility, frontline worker discretion, and an emphasis on mutual trust. Categorical funding, large caseloads and classroom sizes, outmoded traditional ways of running large agencies, training professionals and assuring accountability, and other standard bureaucratic operating procedures hamper the efficacy of local efforts to support children and families. Only by modifying the functioning of large bureaucratic systems, which control the ways in which support and opportunities are provided locally, do we stand the chance of effecting changes in our classrooms, clinics, courts, and neighborhoods on a scale that will ensure success for all children, youth, and families.

Although publicly funded agencies have the lion's share of resources, they have much to gain by building partnerships with private, nonprofit organizations. These agencies and organizations offer services that bridge gaps in a community's ability to support families and offer opportunities for youth development. To ensure that public funds being spent on children and their families have the greatest impact possible, the public sector has a responsibility to involve voluntary and nonprofit organizations in efforts to build supportive communities.

The National Education Goals set ambitious standards for all our schools and students. To achieve those goals collaboration is essential. We must meet a broad range of student needs through a wide range of services and agencies. Prenatal care, parenting education and family support programs, and access to quality health services will increase the likelihood that all children are ready to enter school. As we prepare all students for productive work, employers must join with schools and other community organizations to provide expanded opportunities for work-based learning and develop programs for the transition of youth to initial employment. Clearly, it is in educators' self-interest to be integrally involved in understanding and developing policies and programs that are tangential to the education system.

Such collaboration, however, goes beyond self-interest. Educators play a primary role in preparing our nation's young people for adulthood. Schools are the most universal public institution that has sustained contact with children and youth. Thus, educators must reexamine their own policies and practices to ensure that our schools provide a broad range of developmental opportunities for children and support families to the greatest extent possible.

This does not mean schools need become comprehensive service providers. Schools can change internally in many ways and reach out to other institutions, without single-handedly taking responsibility for ensuring the well-being of all children and families. Educators must continue to restructure the nation's schools so that all students develop needed academic skills and competencies.

However, schools must also contribute to developing other skills and competencies youth need for sustained success in our society. Health and physical education generate knowledge, attitudes and behavior that promote healthful lifestyles. Civics classes and service-learning opportunities encourage active citizenship. Cooperative learning and other group activities foster interpersonal skills and hone students' abilities to develop friendships, work collegially, communicate, and negotiate. Many schools are preparing students for the world of work by providing an early and ongoing orientation to vocational options and what constitutes adequate preparation for different careers. These opportunities can no longer be considered secondary to schools' primary goal of fostering academic achievement. Schools must strengthen and expand their ability to address the mental, physical, and social development of all children.

In addition to taking a critical look at the nature of schooling, educators must also view the school as a potential point of contact for

children and families in need of support and services that can be provided by other agencies and organizations. It is imperative that a school-linked system be put in place. Schools are well-established institutions with ties to all local neighborhoods and communities, municipal structures, and state government. Every community in America has a school, and to some extent the school is already connected to many of the resources that must be employed in a communitywide effort to support families and improve outcomes for children and youth. Yet, schools should not necessarily govern or administer such collaborative efforts. In fact, it would be a grave mistake to assign responsibility for the entire range of children's and family services to school systems that are in many cases already struggling with their basic mission.

The notions of school-linked and community-based support systems are not inherently in conflict. A wide range of agencies, organizations and citizen groups must contribute the expertise and resources to better support children and families. In addition to the school's unparalleled access to students and families, there are other advantages to the school's substantial involvement in such efforts. For example, where school facilities are underused, they can be used to meet other community needs. Moreover, providing certain services at or near the school site—day care for teen parents for example—can help keep young people in school. Making support services available to all students at or near the school site can also lessen any stigma associated with seeking assistance, thereby increasing access to and use of prevention services.

The participation of a broad cross-section of the other major community agencies and organizations is equally essential. By joining the resources of the school with those of other groups at or near the school site, the community expands both the number and the nature of supportive services and developmental opportunities easily available to families and their children. Social service agencies possess the talent and resources to give assistance that schools are not equipped to provide. Community agencies that support youth development—clubs, recreation and sports organizations, and religious organizations—complement schools not only in available services and activities, but also in structure and function. Young people attend voluntarily, have more freedom to choose activities and progress at their own pace, and can attach to the people within organizations for longer periods of time and in more complex ways than is possible in schools. Private and corporate sector involvement can bring increased resources and add greater visibility and legitimacy to efforts to support children and their families.

Care must be taken to ensure that school-linked efforts do not result in schools interfering with or duplicating the efforts of other community groups. All community institutions and agencies serving children and their families must engage in strategic, long-term

planning to ensure that no institution's agenda or organizational needs dominate collaborative efforts. True collaboration requires sharing resources, authority, and leadership to achieve goals unattainable without collective action.

## PRINCIPLES

Our strategies for ensuring student success through broad and deep collaboration among all agencies, institutions and individuals who touch the lives of children are guided by the following principles.

### WE MUST DEFINE THE OUTCOMES WE SEEK FOR ALL CHILDREN IN POSITIVE TERMS AND ALIGN ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THOSE POSITIVE OBJECTIVES.

All too often, we articulate goals in terms of preventing some sort of problem or ameliorating some risk factor. Forging a consensus about the positive outcomes we want our children to achieve is the first step in ensuring that all agencies and institutions involved with our young people are doing more than social "triage." Responding to problems that have already manifested themselves, while necessary, is too little, too late. At a minimum, positive outcomes must encompass the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for sustained success in our society. A beginning list of these necessary skills and competencies includes health and physical competency, personal and social mastery, cognitive and creative ability, vocational accomplishment, and engagement in the work of citizenship.

Systems that serve children and families in our nation provide only services for which they are held accountable. Requiring these agencies and institutions to examine their policies and procedures in light of desired positive outcomes will go a long way toward ensuring that they are actually furthering the well-being of children and youth and helping prepare them to succeed in life. Every institution concerned with children and youth should be able to demonstrate how it is contributing to the development of the full range of competencies.

### EDUCATORS MUST CONTRIBUTE TO AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THAT WILL ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THESE POSITIVE OUTCOMES.

Every community should develop a school-linked support system for children and their families. School-linked support efforts must go beyond co-locating available services. Integration of services may solve access problems by bringing services together in a convenient location, but does not change the fundamental nature or quality

of the supports available to children and families. To ensure that these systems are effective and lead to improved outcomes for young people and their families, school-linked support systems must be:

• *Responsive to the Cultural, Ethnic, and Economic Diversity of the Community.* Communities should structure efforts to more effectively meet the needs of children and their families, not to meet the needs of bureaucratic structures. Available services must be sufficient in kind and number to foster the healthy development of all youth and meet the multiple needs of children and families in distress. Moreover, communities should involve those being served in planning what services will be offered and how they will be delivered. Responsiveness is enhanced when efforts are collaboratively designed and administered by public and private family-serving institutions, including citizen groups. Convening the major public and private entities in a community—the schools, social services, health care providers, and religious and other community-based groups—increases both resources and expertise available to meet identified community needs. The involvement of a broad cross-section of community agencies and organizations also has the potential to raise public awareness of the goals of the effort and how well those goals are being met.

• *Flexible.* To meet the diverse needs of children and families, as well as the needs of the community as they change over time, systems must be flexible. Staff working with children and families must be encouraged to adapt interventions to individual circumstances, rather than rigidly adhering to standardized procedures. They must have extensive knowledge of available community resources and an inclination to work across agency and organizational lines to ensure children and families are connected with those resources. Flexible support means providing services at places and times that are convenient to families. Services should be available at the home, the school, or a neighborhood center, before and after work. Increased flexibility must be accompanied by a shift to outcome-based accountability to allow maximum discretion in how children and families are supported, while ensuring that agency and organizational goals are achieved.

• *Prevention-Oriented.* Our current system of supports is structured to provide support only after problems have become severe. We must be capable of responding to families in crisis, but we must also focus on preventing serious problems from occurring and move beyond problem prevention by providing positive developmental opportunities for all children. Support systems must be built or restructured to meet the basic, developmental needs of all children and also be able to respond to specific problems of children and families in more serious trouble.

• *Family-Centered.* It has been said that the best social program is a strong family. School-linked support efforts must help families fulfill their responsibilities for nurturing their children. Problems confronting parents often affect their children—and the converse can be true as well. Even multiple services offered to an individual may not be helpful if the needs of other family members go unmet.

All families are in need of support at some time. Support for families can range from help in finding quality child care, to literacy training, to assistance in obtaining basic necessities such as food and clothing, depending on community needs and individual family circumstances. Some families will need intensive supports—income support, family counseling, parenting education, drug rehabilitation, and job training—to solve pressing problems and build the skills necessary to ensure that problems do not grow worse or reoccur. The objective is not to supplant families and informal community supports but supplement them when and where necessary to ensure that all children achieve at high levels.

**EDUCATORS MUST INTEGRATE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND BETTER MEET THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH INTO EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURE SCHOOLS.**

The goal of restructuring schools is to improve learner outcomes. To achieve this end, educators must critically examine the nature of schooling to make our education institutions more responsive to students' needs. Efforts to restructure schools must take into account the necessity of working with the community to create an overall environment that is conducive to learning and that prepares youth for employment, family formation, and other adult responsibilities. Changes in school governance, curricula, professional roles for educators, accountability mechanisms, and the quality of interactions with families must occur if we are to rise to the challenge of creating such an environment.

**THESE CHANGES MUST TAKE PLACE AS PART OF A LARGER NATIONAL EFFORT TO ENSURE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN.**

Efforts to support families and ensure positive outcomes for all children and youth will be successful only if we undertake them in the context of a society that is willing and able to afford all children the rich and diverse developmental opportunities and choices they need to succeed in life. Making such support services available will require investing scarce public funds equitably and fairly.

As a nation, we must develop a consensus about what we consider to be a reasonable investment in families and children. We must make a commitment to allocate resources in a way that will

ensure all children and youth achieve the same high levels. Our national economic, education, employment, health, housing, and human service policies must support the provision of extra, but necessary supports to certain individuals in order to ensure all succeed. In some cases, unequal distribution of resources will be required to achieve equitable results.

## Strategies for Change

To make the most of our investment in the education of our nation's children, educators must work collectively with all those who touch the lives of children to ensure they are afforded the opportunities and support needed to become productive, contributing members of society. State education agencies can demonstrate their commitment to the principles described above by embracing the following strategies.

•*Cross-Sector, Outcome-Based Accountability.* We need new systems of interagency accountability for outcomes such as high-level learning and the attainment of other competencies crucial for success in American society. Educators are making great strides in developing accountability systems to ensure that all children are achieving academic competence. However progress toward measuring the acquisition of skills and competencies in other critical areas is lacking. Currently we cannot easily track whether our children are becoming good citizens, adopting behaviors that will ensure future health, or developing an understanding of the value and function of work in our society. Without good indicators of progress toward these desired outcomes, accountability remains elusive. Ideally, every community should have a system for holding schools, human service agencies, and other community organizations accountable for seeing that their combined efforts result in the achievement of agreed-on positive outcomes by all youth. In many cases, accountability will entail revamping data collection, eligibility, and intake systems to assist agencies and organizations in jointly tracking outcomes for children and families.

•*Creative Strategies for Financing Children's and Family Services.* We must develop financing strategies that support the delivery of comprehensive, school-linked services for families and diverse developmental opportunities for all children. This will entail redeploying existing funding to meet the goals of a school-linked strategy. Public dollars must be employed to prevent problems before they happen as well as to provide developmental opportunities for children before they have earned the label "at risk." Funds must also

be freed up for use as "glue" money for planning and administering comprehensive support and development programs that will almost certainly rely on categorical funding. Efforts to use federal funding streams to refinance services currently paid for with state and local funds must be pursued to the fullest extent possible. Financing strategies must be reviewed to assess potential increases in funding, consistency with program goals, and added administrative burden. Any money saved—for instance, by drawing down federal funds, eliminating duplication of services, preventing problems from becoming full-blown and expensive crises, or streamlining costly administrative processes such as determining eligibility—must be reinvested in additional services and for serving additional children and families.

• *Local Governance Structures.* We must establish ongoing, interagency mechanisms for developing and implementing coherent, cross-sector strategies to achieve challenging goals and positive outcomes for children and families. To ensure that available resources are used effectively to support children and families, communities must identify or establish a local authority, spanning education, human service, and community organizations. Such a governing body should be responsible for forging agreement on desired outcomes for children and families, developing new support systems and developmental opportunities to help achieve those outcomes, coordinating fiscal strategies and resource allocations to provide support, and holding agencies and organizations accountable for achieving agreed-on goals.

• *Professional Development.* We need new systems of training at all levels to ensure that teachers and other frontline workers, administrators, and policymakers are able to transform the present system. School-linked support systems will require a cadre of individuals who are able to build trusting relationships with children and families, work comfortably across professional boundaries, and exercise discretion in responding flexibly to the needs of children and families to achieve desired outcomes. Administrators and policymakers will need new fiscal, management, and accountability expertise if they are to create environments that will allow more effective and comprehensive support and development systems to thrive. Institutions of higher education must ensure that their programs produce professionals with these needed capabilities. Schools of education, public health, social work, and other professions should develop a common core of training for all those entering professions that serve children and families. However, this alone will not be sufficient. Public and private agencies must also change their expectations of professional conduct. These changes in expectations must be accompanied by a new capacity to assist current employees

in developing the skills necessary to function in systems that are reoriented to reach specific, positive outcomes for children and families through flexible means.

• *Changes in the Nature of Schooling.* Schools should reevaluate their policies and programs and change them where appropriate to reinforce the goals underlying the provision of support to families and increasing developmental opportunities for children. For instance, the availability of health services should be accompanied by a comprehensive K-12 health curriculum that provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to develop health-enhancing behaviors. Health services and education should be reinforced by a healthy school environment, which includes a psychological climate conducive to learning and a safe physical surrounding. Another curriculum change might involve providing community service learning opportunities. Service learning provides for closer connections between the quality of learning and the quality of life in the community by providing experiential learning opportunities, while transforming students into community resources. Another change involves connecting school and employment. Schools must provide appropriate curricula, resources, and learning places, as well as increase their accountability for the level of students' readiness for work, if job-training and employment services are to be effective.

• *Interactions with Families.* Schools must be able to work in partnership with families in a supportive, culturally competent manner that builds on families' strengths. If school-linked efforts to support families are to be effective, schools and other participating agencies must look critically at the assumptions that underpin the way they interact with families. It is not enough to simply recognize cultural and linguistic diversity; schools must accommodate and respond to the values and cultures of the families they serve. Staff attitudes and expectations may need to change, to create school environments where families feel that their contribution to their children's education is valued.

• *Youth Development Opportunities.* Diverse opportunities for developing competencies that complement and reinforce academic competencies must be available to all youth. The purpose of providing these opportunities must go beyond remediating or even preventing problems—such as school failure, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy—and embrace the development of positive behaviors, such as community service, regular physical activity, leadership skills, and artistic endeavors. Schools must offer these developmental opportunities to the greatest extent possible. Schools can provide opportunities for participation in music, sports, art and drama; chances to take on meaningful leadership roles in the school

community; opportunities in the classroom to develop problem-solving, communication, conflict-resolution, and decision-making skills; and opportunities for seeking guidance from caring adults. Where it is impossible for schools to offer these opportunities directly, educators must join with parents and other members of the community to ensure all children and youth have access to experiences that will build the skills and competencies they need to succeed in life.

## A Call for State Action

We have emphasized the importance of a community-by-community approach in ensuring the well-being of families and improving the life chances of our children and youth. However, responsibility for implementing these strategies cannot be assigned to a particular agency or level of government; it is shared by our entire nation. State government in particular has a crucial role to play.

State government is uniquely positioned to see that relationships across sectors and among the various levels of government are reoriented in ways that improve outcomes for children and their families. Guaranteeing the success of all young people and their families will require exceptional organization of the resources controlled by different agencies and organizations at the federal, state, and local levels. Thus, in addition to bringing coherence to state-level efforts, state agencies must ensure that collaboration extends vertically as well. State governments must work with localities and the federal government to develop systemic plans that will undergird collaborative action. These plans must specifically outline responsibilities at all levels of government for assuring consistent and productive mobilization of resources.

Working closely with the federal government will be particularly important in bringing coherence to the federal, state, and local contributions in a seamless system of supports for families. Federal legislation and rules often dictate the way resources can be applied at the state and local levels. We must ensure that federal programs contribute to an overarching strategy that strengthens families. In many cases, this will entail working with the Congress and the Executive branch to reform and decategorize federal funding streams to provide greater flexibility at the state and local levels. Stronger linkages must be built among Chapter 1, Head Start, and other programs serving children and families. We must carefully examine proposed legislation to determine how it advances our goal of success for all.

If collaboration is to prove a truly effective strategy for improving outcomes for all children and families, state government

must establish a vision and implement standards. State government must then take the lead in developing routines and practices that promote collaboration to reach that vision. Whether by executive order or legislative mandate, state governments must require and reward collaborative, cross-sector planning and implementation of services for children and families. Through assignment or assumption of responsibility, state agencies must take the lead in seeing that collaborative action results in the achievement of specific goals and outcomes. Over time, such leadership will institutionalize the process of jointly conceiving and implementing strategies to realize common goals for children and families.

State agencies must stay informed about strategies that other states are employing to improve services and support through collaboration. Activity in this area is becoming widespread and a number of states are experimenting with policies and practices that are showing early signs of success. Many may be transferable to other states with appropriate modifications to meet unique local and regional circumstances.

If collaboration with other systems is to become deeply rooted, state education agencies and other state agencies concerned with children and families must systematically reassess their internal organizations, practices, and use of resources. This analysis should result in a strategic plan to ensure that each agency is contributing as efficiently as possible to an over-arching system of support. Individual agency decisions should be made with consideration of shared goals and reciprocal effects of actions. State agencies must seek points of leverage—in funding streams, staff development, connections among key leaders, information management, and governance structures—that will allow models of successful, innovative practice to become standard operating procedure.

Rethinking state-level connections and the structure of state agencies has the potential to create a climate in which local efforts to support children and families can thrive. However, state agencies must take direct action to help communities redesign local service delivery systems as well. Some communities may need encouragement to recognize the value of undertaking the difficult process of offering a broad, coherent, and flexible array of services and opportunities to young people and their families. States must ensure that all communities—particularly those most hesitant to address pressing problems—have the resources and expertise available to meet the challenges of implementing the strategies we have outlined. State government must observe the results of local efforts, staying alert for difficulties and challenges that cannot be easily overcome at the local level. The state's monitoring effort must be accompanied by a willingness to change the way state agencies operate and allocate resources, as appropriate.

Communities will need technical assistance in creating

support systems that are responsive, flexible, prevention-oriented, and family-centered. Technical assistance can be provided either by a consortium of state agencies or the formation of public/private intermediary groups. Regardless of how such efforts are structured, state agencies must ensure that their staffs have the requisite levels of fiscal, organizational, and political expertise to assist communities in devising individualized strategies to improve the nature and quality of the support afforded to children and families. Agency directors, managers, and program staff who are responsible for providing technical assistance will need to learn new skills and learn how other systems operate. Position descriptions and performance evaluations will need to be altered to reflect new responsibilities.

Assistance provided by states will necessarily vary according to local needs. State government can provide funds or help communities obtain foundation funds for use as start-up money to lay the groundwork for local efforts. State agencies can serve as clearinghouses to disseminate information, link similar initiatives, and connect local efforts to needed expertise.

Many communities will want help developing positive outcomes and indicators that can be employed at the local level. Although these outcomes should not be imposed from above, neither should every communit ave to start from scratch in developing outcomes and indicators.

Individual states should provide leadership in setting standards of well-being and achievement for all young people against which all appropriate agencies and organizations can be held accountable. These individual state efforts should build on and be integrated with national work on defining and developing indicators and measures of school readiness and other aspects of well-being and achievement (e.g. the National Education Goals, KidsCount). Each state should also develop regular data collection and reporting procedures to track the overall condition of children statewide. Management information systems can also be used at the state and local levels to monitor progress toward positive outcomes and to inform changes in state and local policies and programs.

State government must look toward converging categorical funding streams, lessening administrative burdens such as eligibility determination and shifting public dollars into preventive and developmental services. In many cases, this will entail working with the federal government to reform and decategorize federal funding streams. State government can also waive regulations inhibiting cross-sector activity, as long as waivers do not infringe on civil rights. To increase local options further, states can seek waivers in the administration of federal programs. States may also consider providing statutory authority to form local governing bodies empowered to implement collaborative strategies to improve the well-being of children and youth. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that

deregulation strategies do not result in a net loss of services or decreased accountability.

To a large extent, a locality's ability to ensure improved outcomes will depend on its capacity to rise to the organizational and institutional challenges posed by collaborative efforts to improve community support systems. New systems of preservice and inservice training are needed so that local policymakers, administrators, and practitioners can successfully operate decentralized, flexible programs. State agencies, along with institutions of higher education, should jointly develop training programs that cut across organizational and professional boundaries. Training programs must promote sensitivity to the diverse needs of families and ensure that professionals have the same high expectations for all children.

## Conclusion

The Council of Chief State School Officers is dedicated to assuring that all students succeed in life. Improving the quality of American education is crucial if we are to achieve this objective. Student success, however, can no longer be seen solely as a function of academic achievement. The social and economic imperatives of the 1990s require joint action by all those concerned with the well-being of our nation's children and youth.

An unprecedented opportunity exists for developing a common vision of what we as a nation want for our children and for mobilizing our collective resources to realize that vision. This opportunity is enhanced by a climate of reform among the systems that serve our nation's children and families. We will continue to work closely with other organizations and individuals concerned with the well-being of children and families to promote more strategic and systemic approaches to improving outcomes for all Americans. We are committed to bold, collaborative action to fulfill the promise of the principles and strategies offered in this statement and thereby guarantee the futures of all of our nation's young people.